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INFO NSCE 00,CIAE 00,SSO 00,DODE 00,USIE 00,NSAE 00,CCO 00 /070 W

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izenberg DATE 12/23/91

P 291240Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5617

S E C R E T SAIGON 4361

SUBJECT: AMERICAN OBSERVERS TO VIET-NAM

REF: A. STATE 28239
B. STATE 27856

1. GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS AND PROPOSALS REFTEL B. WE HAVE WORKED THEM INTO SCHEDULING PLANS FOR OBSERVERS AND HAVE HAD NO DIFFICULTY WITH ANY OF THEM. OUR PROPOSED SCHEDULE AS REVISED, ALL OF WHICH SUBJECT OBVIOUSLY TO BEING ADAPTED TO FIT SPECIAL DESIRES INDIVIDUAL OBSERVERS, BEING SENT SEPTEL.

2. TO ASSURE MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY WE HAVE ASSIGNED AN ESCORT OFFICER, AN AUTOMOBILE AND A PLAIN CLOTHES (VIETNAMESE) SECURITY AGENT TO EACH OBSERVER. IN ADDITION INDIVIDUAL AIR TRANSPORT FACILITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE AS DESIRED. ONLY RESTRICTION ON MOVEMENT OF AMERICAN OBSERVERS WILL BE THAT THEY WILL NOT BE PER-

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S E C R E T
MITTED TO TRAVEL INTO AREAS WHERE SECURITY IS BELOW THE ACCEPTABLE LIMITS OF RISK AS DETERMINED BY THE PROVINCE SENIOR ADVISOR. GVN HAS GIVEN BLANKET AUTHORIZATION TO FACILITATE MOVEMENT OF OBSERVERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AS THEY MAY DESIRE.

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3. WE HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT RECEPTION FOR ALL OBSERVERS SCHEDULED FOR 1830 SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 2 WILL BE GIVEN BY GENERAL THIEU AND PRIMIN KY INSTEAD OF BY FONMIN AND THAT CANDIDATES WILL BE INVITED.

4. LATEST FONOFF TALLY ON ACCEPTANCES INDICATES THAT OF 41 COUNTRIES INVITED 15 HAVE ACCEPTED, AS HAS ONE (APU) OF THE THREE PALIAMENTARY ORGANIZATIONS INVITED. ACCORDING TO PRESENT TALLY OVER 60 OFFICIAL OBSERVERS ARE EXPECTED, INCLUDING TWENTY-TWO AMERICAN OBSERVERS. IN ADDITION FONOFF STATES OVER 25 JOURNALISTS ARE ALSO COMING AS OFFICIAL GUESTS OF THE GVN. FONOFF EXPECTS FURTHER ACCEPTANCES PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY. DETAILED BREAKDOWN WILL BE SENT AS SOON AS AVAILABLE.

BUNKER

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INFO GPM 03, SC 01, RSC 01, USIA 12, H 02, NSC 10, NSAE 00, L 03, INR 07, P 04,
CIA 04, DOD 01, SP 02, SS 35, RSR 01, AID 30, IO 21, /156 W

R 291150Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5604
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3988
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2325
AMCONSUL DANANG 832

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4315

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: BINH DINH PROVINCE PRE-ELECTION REPORT.

1. BINH DINH'S REGISTERED VOTER TOTAL IS 302,260, AN IMPRESSIVE 52 PERCENT ABOVE LAST YEAR. BINH DINH IS THE MOST VALUABLE ELECTION PRIZE IN II CORPS, AND EXCEPT FOR GIA DINH AND SAIGON, IN VIETNAM. THE BINH DINH VOTE WILL BE HARED IN SUBSTANTIAL PORTIONS AMONG AT LEAST SIX OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES-- THEIU, SUU, HUONG, HA THUC KY, DZU, AND KHANH. THE ORDER OF FINISH IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT, BUT 30 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL SHOULD PRODUCE A PLURALITY AND THE THIEU-KY SLATE IS OST LIKELY

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 4315 C O N F I D E N T I A L
TO ACCUMULATE THAT MANY VOTES.

2. BINH DINH'S STRONG CATHOLIC GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCES (GSF) ORGANIZATION APPEARS FINALLY TO HAVEOPTED FOR THE GVN

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TICKET, BUT NOT WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL DISSENTION. THE DEUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE GSF, NGUYEN LUT, IS TRAN VAN HUONG'S DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE IN THE PROVINCE.

3. THIUE AND KY ENJOY ANOTHER PLUS, THE FACT THEY ARE BOTH WELL KNOWN TO ELECTORATE. MOST RECENT VIST BY THIEU WAS END OF JULY WHEN AS ELSEWHERE, ADDRESSED NEWLY ELECTED VILLAGE AND HAMLET OFFICIALS IN CEREMONY AT WHICH THEY SWORE OATHS OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE STATE.

4. THE GVN'S SHARE OF THE MILITARY VOTE (ABOUT 35,000) WILL NOT BE AS GRET AS ELSEWHERE, HOWEVER; THE COMMANDER OF THE 40TH REGIMENT OF THE 22ND ARVN DIVISION (ONE OF TWO ARVN REGIMENTS STATIONED IN BNINH DINH) IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET PARY. IN FACT, THE OFFICER (LT. COL. NGUYEN BA LONG) WAS RELIEVED TWO MONTHS AGO HE SAYS FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY. HE HAS SINCE BEEN RETURNED TO HIS POST. ON THE PLUS SIDE FOR THE GVN IS THE FACT THAT SECURITY IN THE PROVINCES HAS IMPROVED MARKEDLY AND WITH IT THE LIVING STANDARD OF THE PEOPLE. ALTHOUGH THIS IMPROVEMENT IS

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DUE LARGELY TO THE MILITARY ACTIVITY OF US AND KOREAN TROOPS, SOME CREDIT WILL ACCRUE TO THE GVN GENERALS. AMONG THE 250,000 RURAL POPULATION, THIS WILL BRING THEM VOTES.

5. WEIGHTING AGAINST THE GVN SLATE IS TM
GOOD ORGANIZATION
OF THE OPPOSITION (REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIETS, VNQDD, NEW DAI VIETS, SUU/DAN, ETC.). EACH WILL CUT INTO THE THEIU-KY TOTAL.

6. PHAN KHAC SUU MAY MAKE HIS BEST SHOWING IN BINH DINH OF ANY II CORPS PROVINCE, PERHAPS ACCUMULATING 20 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. SUU'S SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN ACTIVE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. HIS CAMPAIGN IS BEING MANAGED BY BINH DINH'S CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEPUTY LUONG TUONG HAI. HAI'S CA SLATE WON HANDILY LAST YEAR; HE HAS BEEN AMEMBER OF THE NGUEYN THONG TAM VNQDD FACTION AND MAY BRING SOME NTT VNQDD DISSIDENTS WITH HIM. THE SUU-DAN

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SLATE WILL GET ITS BIGGEST SUPPORT, HOWEVER FROM THE LARGE BUDDHIST POPULATION WHICH BY AND LARGE IS LED BY ANTI-GVN BONZES. THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO BE INCENSED OVER THE NEW BUDDHIST CHARTER. INDICATION OF THEIR SUPPORT FOR SUU COMES FROM LEADING BUDDHIST LAYMAN NGUYEN GIA PHUOC.

7. BUDDHIST BACKLASH SUPPORT FOR SUU-DAN CUTS INTO THE HOONG-TRUYEN VOTE IN BINH DINH. MOREOVER, HUONG'S SHARE OF THE CATHOLIC VOTE

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WILL BE SMALLER THAN ELSEWHERE (SEE ABO .). BINH DINH MAY BE THE ONLY COASTAL II CORPS PROVINCE IN WHICH SUU BESTS HUONG.

8. HA THUC KY MAY PICK UP 10 PERCENT OF THE HEAVILY FRAGMENTED VOTE. HIS STRONGEST SUPPORT APPARENTLY LIES IN THE BONG SONG PLAIN AREA, WHERE THE 40TH ARVN REGIMENT COMMANDER HAS LONG BEEN ADVANCING PARTY INTERESTS (SEE ABOVE).

9. TRUONG DINH DZU, WHOSE PRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN WELL-RECEIVED IN II CORPS CAMPAIGN APPEARANCES, HAS A WELL ORGANIZED AND WELL FINANCED ORGANIZATION IN BINH DINH. HIS SUPPORTERS INCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCE'S TINY NEW DAI VIETPARTY AS WELLAS OUTSIDERS WHO HAVE APPEARED IN ALMOST EVERY AREA OF THE PROVINCE. DZU WAS ALSO BORN IN BINH DINH. IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL HOW WELL ALL THIS ACTIVITY FOR DZU WILL PAY OFFON SEPT 3, BU HE IS DARK HORSE CONTENDER FOR FOURTH PLACE.

10. THE CANDIDACIES OF VU HONG KHANH AND NGUYEN HOA HIEP, BOTH LEADERS OF COMPETING VNQDD FACTIONS, HAVE TRIGGERED AND INTERNANAL STRUGGLE IN THE KY BO VNQDD SPLINTER, WHICH IS PROBABLY STRONGEST OF ALL THE PARTY'S MANY CONTENDING GROUPS IN BINH DING. KY BO PARTY SECRETARY TRAN MAI AND HIS DEUTY DOAN THAN, BOTH OF WHOM FAVOR HIEP, WERE RECENTLY OUSTED BY FORCES LED BY FORMER KY BO

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PROVINCIAL PARTY SECRETARY NGUYEN HUU THOI. THOI'S GROUP REPORTEDLY DID NOT WANT EITHER HIEP OR KHANH TO RUN BUT HAVE RELUCTANTLY,

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"FOR THE GOOD OF THE PARTY," DECIDED THEY MUST SUPPORT KHANH. ASIDE FROM THIS PART OF THE KY BO FACTION, KHANH'S SUPPORT IN BINH DINH IS MINIMAL.

11. THE CAMPAIGN IN BINH DINH DID NOT GET UNDERWAY UNTIL AUGUST 17, WHEN THERE WAS A WELL-PLANNED AND ATTENDED APPEARANCE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN QUI NHON. ALTHOUGH HIS MOTIVES ARE NOT CLEAR, II CORPS COMMANDING GENERAL VINH LOC DID ORDER THE BINH DIN PROVICNE CHIEF, LT. COL. TRAN DINH VONG, TO CANCEL HIS PLANNED PRESENCE AT THE CANDIDATES' MEEING IN QUI NHON. SOME INTERPRET THIS AS AN ATTEMPTY BY LOC TO SNUB THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES. BE THAT AS IT MAY, VONG'S ABSENCE DID NOT EVOKE VISIBLE ADVERSE REACTIONAND THE MEETING WENT OFF WELL. VIS ACTIVITY IN SUPPORT OF THE FLECTION IS REPORTED TO BE EXCELLENT ANDNON-PARTISAN. SOME COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN REGISTERED BY THA LOCAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE. FOR EXAMPLE, REPRESENTATIVES OF HA THUC KY HAVE COMPLAINED THATTHEY HAVE BEEN PROHIITED FROM HOLDING SEPARATE RALLIES. THE COMPLAINT HAS BEEN RULED OUT AS THE LOCAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE HAD DECIDED THAT

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ALL APPEARANCES BY CANDIDATES' REPRESENTATIVES MUST BE JOINT. ONE MORE SERIOUS BUT UNSUBSTANTIATED CHARGE HAS BEEN HEARD. ONE OF HUONG' S REPRESENTATIVES HAS CHARGED THAT A PROVINCE OFFICIAL HAS OFFERED 5,000 PIASTERS TO EVERY HAMLET IN ONE DISTRICT THAT VOTES FOR THEIU AND KY.

12. THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS WHICH WORK TO INHIBIT GVN MANIPULATION OF THE VOTE IN BINH DINH. NUMEROUS WELL-PLACED OFFICIALS SUPPORT OTHER CANDIDATES, INCLUDING THE DISTRICT CHIEF OF POPULOUS TUY PHOUC AND THE 40TH REGIMENT COMMANDER. SEVERAL OTHER DISTRICT CHIEFS ARE GRADUATES OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION AND ARE CIVILIAN-ORIENTEDVM MORE IMPORTANT, THE EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION OF THE OPPOSITION IN BINH DINH WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FMV FRAUD TO GO UNNOTICED. NEVERTHELESS, MOST REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES EXPRESS APPREHENSION AT ELEVENTH-HOUR INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE GVN SLATE BY "THE AUTHORITIES." BUNKER

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